

**2015 PROCEEDINGS of the
New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference**

Over the past decade few agricultural enterprises have seen growth to match that of the UK cider industry. In 2006 cider was 1.2% of UK total alcohol sales; by 2012 it had risen to 9.4% and has since remained stable. Furthermore, in 2012 over 70% of all global cider was made and consumed in the UK; in 2015 it was less than 43%, demonstrating the huge growth in the global popularity of cider.

Global consumption of cider is predicted to grow by around 5% a year, from a 2015 level of 2.4bn litres to more than 3bn litres by 2020, with some 70% of the extra consumption expected to come from the US, Australia and South Africa. In the US the forecast is for growth of 12% per year up to 2020.

If the popularity of cider in both the UK and the rest of the world continues then it will require an increase in raw ingredients. The global consumer is recognising that cider apples are a key ingredient of the popularity of the product. There is currently an undersupply globally.

- How can modern methods of apple production be applied to meet this global demand?
- What apples do the cider-makers want, and why?
- What are the economic and environmental issues of growing cider apples?

In the UK, although a lot of cider is made without cider apples, the categories in growth are those using a percentage of bittersweet fruit. Tradition and culture are important to cider, but why is bittersweet fruit important to cider? And if the economics of growing cider apples are not great what are the varieties, the methods and the processes by which we have combated this in the UK?

We will be discussing orchard size, apple varieties, growing methods, treatments, mechanisation, plant & equipment and organisational structure. We will review the place of concentrate in the development of the industry in the US and the opportunities offered by strategic partnerships and cooperative ventures.

Neil Macdonald is a current Nuffield Agricultural Scholar whose scholarship travels have taken him to Australasia, America and Europe to research his topic. This presentation offers some insights into his findings on the state of the industry globally.